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Arms Report Raises Problem of Security

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WASHINGTON, April 7—A long, unclassified statement containing details of the Pentagon's military research activities has prompted questions in Congress as to whether such disclosures might endanger United States security.

The questions were raised in a closed hearing of the House defense appropriations subcommittee March 19. A partly censored transcript of the hearing was released today.

The transcript revealed that Representative George H. Mahon, chairman of the subcommittee, had brought up the security problem after Dr. Harold Brown, Defense Department research director, had finished reading the opening statement in his testimony.

As in the past, the state-

ment outlined, with no restrictions as to publication, many details of United States plans that will shape the nation's future military posture. These plans included new types of missiles, airplanes, space satellite and anti-submarine devices, chemical, biological and radiological warfare techniques, and a variety of advanced technological programs, including nuclear tests.

As soon as Dr. Brown finished reading the statement, Mr. Mahon, a Texas Democrat, said: "You refer, Dr. Brown, to this statement as being 'unclassified.' It seems to me the statement may contain much material which would be helpful to an opponent."

The chairman said he realized that, in the United States, the Government and private sources regularly release "information helpful to any rival or enemy of the United States."

"How do you rationalize this procedure?" he asked Dr. Brown. The defense official replied:

"Mr. Chairman, I worry about

this myself. Although this statement consists entirely of things which have either been released officially before or are public knowledge, the gathering of it together in one place and its expression by a public official like myself does make it authoritative."

The exchange was followed by a discussion of the possible effects of such freedom of information. The discussion revived a subject that has frequently caused concern in the capital. This time, however, it was a member of Congress who described the possible security effects. In the past, members of Congress have often sought more information and officials of the Pentagon have tried to keep the material secret.

Brown Urges 'Balance'

Pierre Salinger, White House press secretary, has described official Government documents, particularly published testimony of Government officials before Congress, as serious "leaks" of security material.

Under the Kennedy Administration, the Pentagon has attempted to classify Congressional presentations with greater caution. This move has met some resistance, especially from the house Subcommittee on Government Information.

In the House hearing, Dr. Brown said that a "balance has to be struck" between informing the public, to gain support for

the military program, and "how much at the same time you have to tell potential enemies about our program." He said that the Russians undoubtedly had more information than what he revealed in his statement.

"However, we are binding it together in a very nice, convenient place for them to get it," he said. He went on:

"My own judgment is that, because of the way we determine things in this country—and it is the right way, the way that distinguishes us from the other side—we must have an informed public.

"We can only have an informed public by giving out information that we, sometimes wish not so many people knew."

Finds No 'Specific Value'

Dr. Brown observed that his statement would probably not be of "specific value" to the Russians because it contained no "numbers" and other indications of the capabilities of the weapon systems.

"It does, however, give an idea of what our thinking is," he said. But he asserted that this was "not necessarily a mistake."

"Having the other side know what we are thinking can in some cases be useful," he said.

Mr. Mahon asked Dr. Brown to explain that comment, but the answer was not contained in the transcript.

Dr. Brown said that his state-

ment had been carefully prepared to summarize subjects rather than to indicate priorities among research programs.

Representative William E. Minshall, Republican of Ohio, asked whether there was "some reason for putting this information in one spot for them?"

"No, sir," Dr. Brown replied. "I think this has just become a traditional thing to do. It has been done for the use of this committee and not for the Soviet Union."

Industrial Growth Noted

He explained at another point that the statement had been reviewed by classification officials of the Defense Department.

In response to other questions, Dr. Brown said that Soviet scientists had not had a big enough industrial community upon which to rely for support. Now, they do have a large industrial capacity and in ten years may outproduce the United States in scientists and engineers, he said.

"When it comes to engineering and technology, we are not intrinsically able to do anything that the Soviets, or other countries, are unable to do," Dr. Brown said.

The United States' edge so far has been in the management of its technical resources, he said. But he asserted that the United States has not made the most of that advantage.